

EMPHASIS on ON-the-JOB TRAINING

OLYMPIC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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Leveraging Resources

The Olympic WDC now emphasizes that the employers on the demand side of the system take a more initiatory role rather than the job seekers, as has been the case for most of the WIA program history. This new approach places most of the responsibility for establishing On-the-Job Training positions on the Business Services Team. New opportunities have emerged for unemployed workers in high growth sectors. Early indicators of success show OJTs being initiated for new positions in energy/construction, aerospace and healthcare.



The Olympic Workforce Development Council coupled OJT opportunities with an ARRA-funded grant to stimulate hiring of retrained unemployed workers in the growing field of energy efficiency and green construction. The OWDC received a grant as a partner with the Northwest Energy Efficiency Council (NEEC) and the Seattle/King County WDC for weatherization and energy related training. This grant, called the Sound Energy Efficiency Development (SEED) Grant, uses the local workforce development partnership to address the training and employment needs of veterans and unemployment recipients in the area. Over 110 people were trained in the three-county area as Weatherization Technicians, Certified Building Analysts and Building Energy Auditors. All graduates received an industry-recognized certification.

When the SEED Grant was first planned, it was anticipated that economic conditions would be improving and the energy field would show strong growth for the clients. What happened instead was slow economic growth, which resulted in a delay launching local green initiatives. One project called for 5,000 energy audits to be conducted and funded through a federal grant to RePower Bainbridge. The energy audit efforts started to increase early in 2011. During this time, the OWDC received WIA 10% funds targeted to On-the-Job Training positions. This allowed the partnership to take the students that graduated from training and use the OJT benefits to stimulate hiring the students. As a result, the local WorkSource Business Services Team had another “tool” in its toolbox for employers. Job seekers who completed their certified training would be more employable in today’s employment market, and the community would gain from a growth in jobs as well as enjoy better energy usage. The result of the Business Services Team effort to connect with employers is now starting to be realized with four new employers added to the job order system and eight new hires recorded.

An important key to the success of this project was the ability to combine three different grants and to use them together for the good of the industry and the job seekers. Clearly communicating how each grant would work in combination with the other, and how it would help all partners presented a strong rationale for collaboration.

CRITICAL PARTNERS

Olympic Workforce Development Council

Employment Security Department

Kitsap Community Resources

Olympic Educational Services District 114

Organized Labor

Olympic College

Peninsula College

NEEC

Seattle-King County WDC

RePower Bainbridge